

# Adults (25+) with no children

*Physical activity insights*

“It’s definitely more fun when you exercise with other people. And it makes you do it too, because you don’t want to let them down.”

– Female, Melbourne



**This life stage is broad, comprising all Victorian adults over the age of 25 years who are not parents of dependent children or retired. Some in this life stage are yet to have children, some will never have children, and others are parents of independent (adult) children.**

Despite this diversity, this group shares characteristics such as increased emotional and financial stability (compared with younger adults) and the freedom to make more deliberate choices about their lifestyle. Many are in a period of consolidation of career and financial aspirations, either to set themselves up initially, or in preparation for retirement.

- Two in five adults in this life stage (40%) are active for 30 minutes or more on at least four days per week.
- Only 13% of men and 5% of women in this segment participate in sport weekly.

This life stage snapshot is part of a set looking at levels of physical activity among Victorians. It has been developed from research commissioned by VicHealth and explores what influences Victorians to be less or more active, and what would motivate them to change their existing behaviours.

**To view the other snapshots, and for more information, visit [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/lifestages](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/lifestages)**

Most of the adults in this life stage who play sport also did so as children and enjoy their continued involvement. For others, a lack of interest in and enjoyment of sport is a considerable barrier, particularly for women.

## Activity levels of adults with no children



‘Inactive’ = no days of 30-minute sessions of physical activity per week; ‘Somewhat active’ = 1 to 3 days of 30-minute sessions per week; ‘Active’ = 4+ days of 30-minute sessions per week.

Many in this life stage are focused on work and career and feel they are unable to make a firm commitment to turning up to every game and training. Less active people in this life stage feel that they would have to sacrifice personal time to be able to exercise.

Adults in this life stage do not dispute the health benefits of physical activity. However, there is stronger agreement about the health benefits from active adults compared to less active adults.

The cost of gyms and organised sport is a major barrier, with nearly three in five adults in this life stage considering cost a barrier, particularly inactive women.

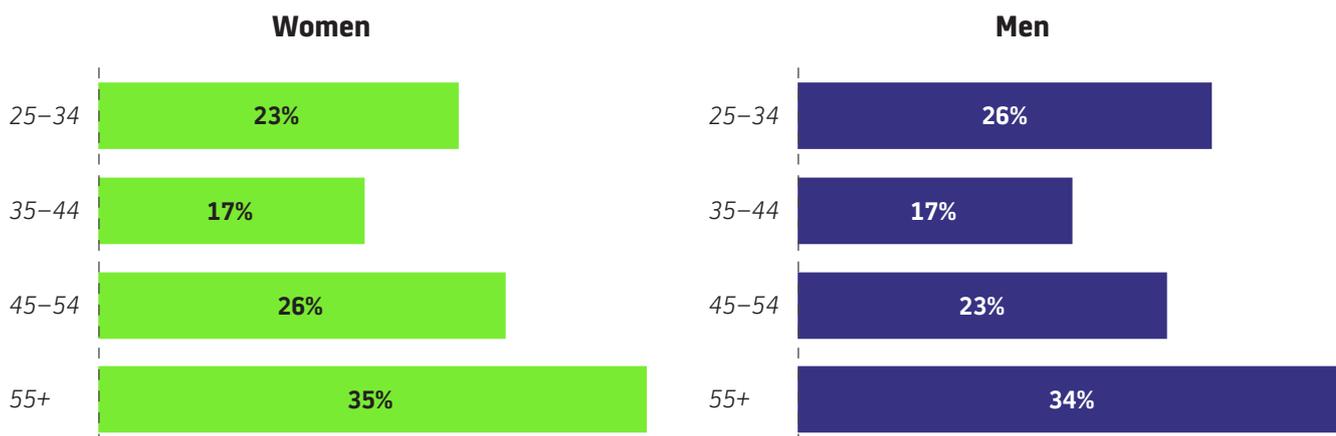
**Inactive men and women in this life stage are:**

- less likely to be in the workforce
- less likely to see the benefits of physical activity
- less likely to have any interest in getting active
- less likely to see a link between a good exercise routine and physical activity levels

**...than their more active peers.**

Individuals in this life stage classified as ‘inactive’ tend to be older than their more active peers: more than a third are aged 55 and older, and the threat of injury (and its effect on movement, pain and ability to work) is a limiting factor for them.

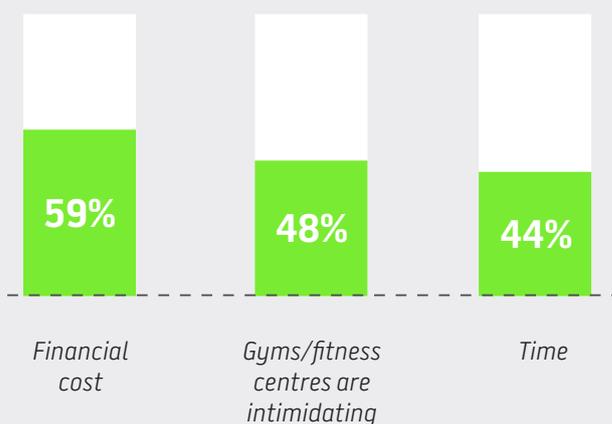
**AGE DISTRIBUTION OF INACTIVE WOMEN AND MEN IN THIS LIFE STAGE**



**Perceived benefits of physical activity for adults without children**



**Barriers to physical activity for adults without children**



**AMONG ALL VICTORIAN ADULTS:**

**5%** are **inactive** women with no children

**5%** are **inactive** men with no children

**9%** are **somewhat active** women with no children

**9%** are **somewhat active** men with no children

## Focus on women

Both men and women in this life stage use physical activity for weight management. For women, how they look and feel in clothes is a key consideration.

with someone else involved and feel that social interaction makes physical activity easier and more fun.

Adults in this life stage are most likely to consider walking as a way to increase their current level of activity. Women are more likely to choose walking

There are significant barriers to physical activity for women in this life stage:

### BARRIERS FOR WOMEN

#### Feel intimidated

49% of women believe that sports clubs are intimidating, with inactive and somewhat active women more likely to feel this way.

#### Less likely to think feeling good is benefit of physical activity

Inactive women are significantly less likely to think that feeling good about themselves will be a benefit of physical activity until they have experienced it for themselves.

#### Feel embarrassed exercising in public

Two in five women feel embarrassed exercising in public, particularly inactive women (56%), severely limiting the types of physical activity that are in their comfort zone.

#### Think they lack coordination

Many women (particularly inactive women) claim they lack coordination when it comes to physical activity.

#### Low household income

Inactive women are more likely to be on a low household income compared to those who are more active.

### Activity levels of women with no children

**INACTIVE**  
**22%**

**SOMEWHAT ACTIVE**  
**38%**

**ACTIVE**  
**40%**

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## Meet Stephanie, *an inactive adult*

**S**tephanie is 57 years old and is a part-time nurse. She has worked in the same general practice clinic for the past 20 years and gradually reduced her working days to three, to enable her to look after her parents.

**H**er partner says they should try walking to work when the weather is good, but Steph feels driving is the easiest way to get around, especially if she needs to run errands for her parents after work.



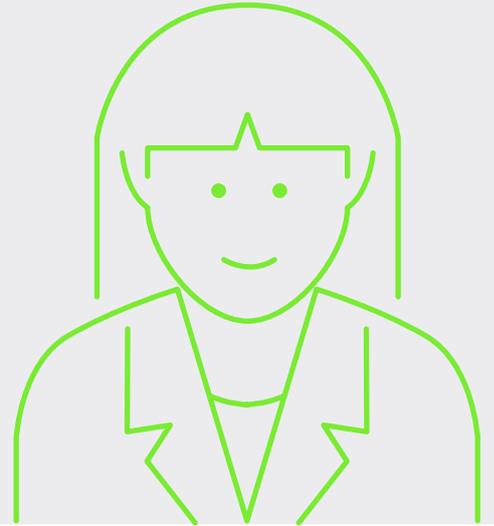
**O**n most evenings, Steph and her partner have dinner at home and then take their dog to the park where they'll have a chat with the other owners while watching the dogs play. On some weekends, they get together with their neighbours over coffee, or invite friends for dinner. They like watching TV in their spare time and love going to support their team during the footy season.

**S**teph doesn't think that regular exercise would really benefit her much and she worries that she might get injured. She finds gyms intimidating anyway, and wouldn't want to get hot and sweaty in front of other people. Steph has looked into joining the local park's tai chi sessions but feels that's something for when they are older.



## Meet Bianca, a somewhat active adult

**B**ianca is a 35-year old who lives alone in her own apartment. Born into a second-generation Italian migrant family, she loves her family's Sunday lunch get-togethers alongside the freedom and independence of her single status.



**B**ianca works full time as a client officer for a furniture company, a job she enjoys and is focused on. She relishes having a regular routine, including catching the train each morning and walking 10 minutes from the station to work. Sometimes she gets off a stop earlier for a longer walk, but never in the winter.

**S**he feels that walking around the furniture shop is her main form of exercise but she and a work colleague also join a weekly lunchtime yoga session in the next building. She has little interest in playing sport and feels that many clubs are not welcoming of new people.



**B**ianca enjoys her social time after work. Having had a stable job and income means she can spend a bit more on going out, after setting aside money for regular payments. Saturdays are spent on some housework, shopping, babysitting her nephews or going to the movies with her best friend. Sundays are for visiting her parents and helping to prepare the food for family lunch.

# Focus on men

## Use exercise for weight management

For men this benefit is related primarily to “feeling fit, stronger and confident”.

More than a quarter of men in this life stage (26%) only exercise when they’re trying to lose weight.

## Motivated to recapture “youthly” sporting and recreational pursuits

Only 13% of men in this life stage participate in sport on a weekly basis. They are less likely to be involved than other life stages.

A significant proportion of men in this life stage find sports clubs intimidating (33%) or unwelcoming (27%).

Many are concerned that they have lost confidence since their younger days and that they won’t get the same enjoyment if they can’t participate with the same level of skill.

## Active travel is a top weekly activity

Active travel is a key form of physical activity for men in this life stage.

31% report they would be more likely to walk, run or cycle to work if better shower and change facilities were available at their workplace.

## Activity levels of men with no children



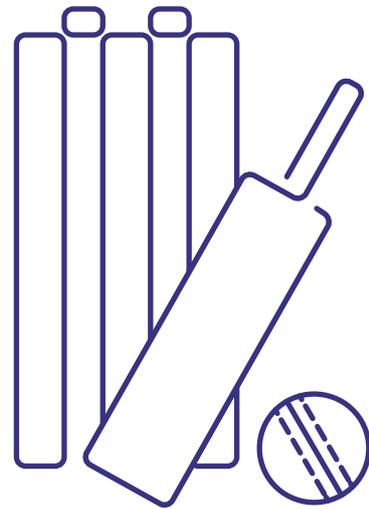
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## Meet Sean, *an inactive adult*

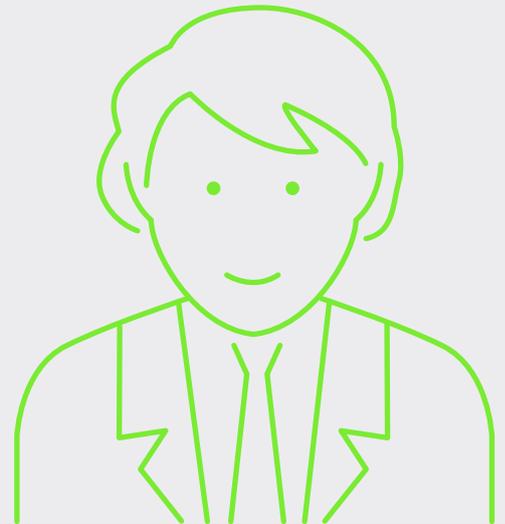
**S**ean is a Sergeant in the Police force in regional Victoria. He and his partner, Ryan, are both 43 and have been together for eleven years and have no children. They like to spend time binge-watching the latest series on cable television and their competitive nature only extends to who can find the best next series to watch.

**S**ean enjoyed playing in a cricket team when he was in his early twenties – and he was pretty good at it. His team, the Wombats, played on Saturday mornings and trained on Wednesday nights, but as Sean became more interested in going out, he would often opt out at the last minute – who wants to play sport on Saturday morning after going out on Friday? His team mates cared about winning and didn't appreciate not being able to rely on him. Conversely, he didn't enjoy feeling like he was letting the team down, so he didn't sign up for the next season.



**W**hile he would like to recapture the enjoyable feeling cricket once gave him and feels that it might be a good way to relieve the stress of his job, he is a bit embarrassed to even try, as he feels his body may not be able to perform to the same level these days. This is only a fleeting thought, however, as he still prefers to hang about at home with Ryan and doesn't feel he should have to give up his personal time to exercise.

## Meet Rahul, *a somewhat active adult*



**R**ahul is single and 27 years old. He works in a government job in the city, which isn't too far from where he lives. He enjoys walking to and from work every day, which is half an hour each way. He would definitely run or ride if his workplace had better shower facilities.



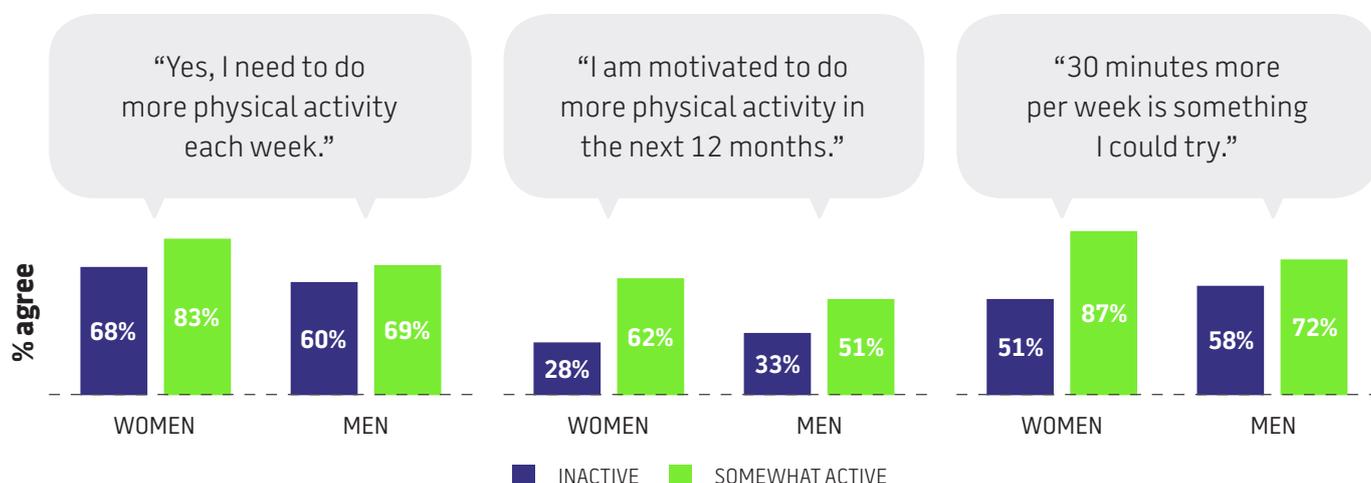
**T**here is a gym within a five-minute walk from work and he has often thought that his workplace should do some kind of deal with them to get an office-wide discount. He feels that this sort of benefit would be taken up by a lot of his colleagues, including himself. But the thought hasn't gone much further than a couple of discussions with colleagues in the tea room – and none of them have any idea of how to progress such a plan.

**R**ahul swims at least once a week in the mornings at the local suburban aquatic centre. He goes more often in the warmer months, but finds it hard to drag himself out of bed when it is so cold and dark. He enjoys the thinking time that swimming offers him, as well as the therapeutic relief from stress. He realises that more often than not when he opts out and doesn't go, it is because he's feeling too stressed.



**R**ahul has a jogging partner, Simona, but the jogs aren't regular. They would probably go out around once or twice a fortnight. If Simona pulls out of their run, he doesn't go either.

# Are less active adults with no children ready to do more physical activity?



## Trigger points for adults with no children

Triggers for increasing physical activity will be most successful at times of change, when Victorians are reflecting on their life. For adults with no children, these times include:



Change in employment



New relationship



Changes in relationships



Moving house



Seasons/weather

## How should we talk to adults with no children about being physically active?

- Introduce and reinforce the notion of planning and routine.
- Raise awareness of options for being active – i.e. different types of activity and what's available locally.
- Highlight the recognised benefits – feeling good, weight management (especially for women) and feeling fit (especially for men).
- Reinforce the social aspects of being active, especially for women.

While 63% of inactive women in this segment are daily users of social media, only 35% of their male counterparts are.



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